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TELEGRAM

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EXCISE

PAGE 01 SAIGON 02765 101122Z

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ACTION SS 25

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P 101017Z AUG 67
FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4340

C O N F I D E N T I A L SAIGON 2765

EXDIS

1. AUGUST 10 EMBOFF CALLED ON NGUYEN VAN HUONG, GENERAL NGUYEN VAN THIEU'S CAMPAIGN MANAGER. HUONG, WHO LIKE MANY VIETNAMESE, IS POLITICAL THEORETICIAN, TALKED AT LENGTH ABOUT HIS PLANS FOR THE FUTURE. HE SAID THAT HE HAD ADVISED THIEU THAT A MERE VICTORY IN THE SEPTEMBER 3 ELECTION WAS NOT ENOUGH IF THIEU WAS NOT ABLE TO PROJECT AN IMAGE OF PROBITY AND SINCEREITY AND THUS GENERATE POPULAR SUPPORT FOR HIS REGIME WITHIN THE MASSES. HUONG FEELS THAT THIEU'S STANDING MADE A MODEST RISE AS A RESULT OF HIS WILLINGNESS TO STAND UP TO KY AND CRITICIZE THE LATTER'S UNFAIR CAMPAIGN TACTICS IN MAY AND JUNE AND EVENTUALLY WREST THE TOP POSITION ON THE MILITARY

PAGE 2 RUMJIR 2765 C O N F I D E N T I A L
TICKET. IT SEEMED CLEAR FROM WHAT HUONG SAID, THAT HE SAW THIS AS ONLY A SMALL BEGINNING AND THAT MUCH IMAGE BUILDING REMAINED TO BE DONE.

2. HUONG THEN TALKED AT LENGTH ABOUT HIS OWN PLANS FOR ORGANIZING A POLITICAL BASE OF SUPPORT FOR THE THIEU REGIME IN THE COUNTRYSIDE. HE SAID THAT HE HAD BEEN IN TOUCH WITH CAO DAI, HOA HAO, BUDDHIST AND CATHOLIC LEADERS [redacted] AND WAS MAKING PROGRESS. HE EMPHASIZED THAT THE NETWORK OF CADRES HE WAS TRYING TO BUILD MUST "BE SEMI-OFFICIAL AND SEMI-SECRET",

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR
REVIEWED BY Joan Izubey DATE 10/7/81
PORTIONS DENIED ~~AS~~ INDICATED

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Par 1 of 4 Views

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TELEGRAM

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PAGE 02 SAIGON 02765 181222Z

IF IT WERE TO BE A POLITICAL FORCE CAPABLE OF COPING WITH THE VIET CONG. FROM HIS LONG EXPOSE, IT SEEMED CLEAR THAT OLD DAI VIET HUONG IS STILL THINKING IN TERMS OF AN ORGANIZATION PATTERNED ALONG THE LINES OF THAT SEMI-CLANDESTINE POLITICAL PARTY. HE EMPHASIZED THAT HIS RESOURCES WERE NOT ADEQUATE TO THE TASK AT HAND BUT HE STILL FEELS THAT HE IS MAKING PROGRESS IN ORGANIZING HIS NETWORK.

3. MENTION OF FINANCIAL RESOURCES CAUSED EMBOFF TO ASK ABOUT

PAGE 3 RUMJIR 2765 C O N F I D E N T I A L

CAMPAIGN FUNDS AVAILABLE TO THE THIEU-KY SLATE AND TO ENQUIRE HOW THE CAMPAIGN ACTIVITIES OF THE TWO GENERALS WERE MESHING. USONG SHOOK HIS HEAD RUEFULLY AND SAID THAT THINGS WERE NOT GOING WELL. THIEU HAD NO FUNDS OF HIS OWN OF ANY CONSEQUENCE AND HAD TO DEPEND ON KY. LATTER HAD APPROVED THE CAMPAIGN BUDGET, BUT DESPITE THIS NO MONEY WAS FORTHCOMING. HUONG FEELS THAT KY WANTS THIEU TO COME HAT IN HAND TO PETITION FOR UNDS AND PER S AGREE TO SHARE POWER IN EXCHANGE FOR FINANIAL HELP. THUONG PRIDE, IN HUONG'S VIEW, WILL NEVER PERMIT M TO DO THIS.

COMMENT: THROUGHOUT CONVERSATION HUONG MADE MANY REFERENCES "WHEN THIEU COMES TO POWER" AND HE IS OBVIOUSLY NOT THINKING IM AS A FIGUREHEAD PRESIDENT. IT SEEMS CLEAR EROM WHAT HE THAT HUONG HAS NO KNOWLEDGE OF ANY DEAL WHICH WOULD ASSIGN POWER IN THE FUTURE GOVERNMENT TO KY.

FOR HIS REMARKS ABOUT CAMPAIGN FINANCING,

bml
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AMPAIGN MACHINERY IS OBVIOUSLY HAVING MONEY TROUBLES.

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